

NIFA Clips

[Helping veterans, producers with disabilities: Texas AgAbility reaches out to assist farmers and ranchers remain on their land \(The Eagle, 3/17\)](#) Tim Smith, who has a degenerative bone disease, is the owner of S&L Farms in Anderson, a 28-acre year-round organic agricultural operation producing a variety of vegetables, as well as laying hens and Thanksgiving turkeys. For years, Smith, now 54, had to work his land with a 1948 Ford tractor and rototiller or plow with implements either built for the antique tractor or designed to be pulled by a horse. But that was before he found out about the Texas AgrAbility Project administered by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, part of the Texas A&M University System. The Texas AgrAbility Project was established in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

[Summit to help new organic farmers \(LaCrosse Tribune, 3/15\)](#) The New Farmer Summit will teach new and aspiring organic farmers the field and financial sides of the business April 4 and 5 at Primrose Valley Farm near New Glarus. The event will include 24 workshops on topics such as caring for livestock, organic vegetables, orchards, bees, soil, equipment, creative access to farmland, finding funding, making a business plan and how to obtain organic certification. The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service and Renewing the Countryside, are organizing the event. Sponsors include Agrarian Trust, the National Young Farmers Coalition and the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, with funding through a grant from the USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program.

[NMSU Las Cruces part of national pilot program examining behavioral health \(KRWG, 3/15\)](#) Grappling with behavioral health problems, especially substance use and abuse and mental health, is a continual struggle for many communities across the country. The challenge for leaders in those communities is that the occurrence of these issues can vary greatly from place to place, but accurate local data for a community can be hard to come by. A team from New Mexico State University is part of a national pilot project to address that challenge in communities like Dona Ana County. Brent Elrod, national program leader for community and rural development at USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture, helped launch the CAPE program at the federal level.

[Wooster farmers form cooperative to sell food in Cleveland, aided by USDA grant \(Cleveland.com, 3/16\)](#) Monica Bongue sees Ohio like many others in the local food movement: As a state rich in possibilities, with three big, hungry cities surrounded by a lot of productive farmland. "We were maxed out with our customers," Bongue told her audience at the recent [Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association](#) conference in Granville. "We were farmers with not enough market." They wanted their own community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, but as any farmer can tell you, growing food and running a business – especially one with customers 50 miles away – is a plate piled high. Bongue applied for a grant from the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education](#) program.

[Direct farm sales may boost local growth \(Local Yonder, 3/17\)](#) Despite their typically small size and sparse distribution, farms that sell their products locally may boost economic growth in their

communities in some regions of the U.S., according to a team of economists. The team's findings, which appear in the February 2014 issue of *Economic Development Quarterly*, shed new light on the role that local food sales play in economies and may help inform policymakers about supporting community-focused agriculture programs. The research was funded by the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative of the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

[**WSSU receives a \\$150,000 grant for summer camp**](#) (**Winston-Salem Journal, 3/17**) Winston-Salem State University is planning a summer camp to combat childhood obesity thanks to a \$150,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The camp — Rams Fitness Academy — will serve 125 or more children 10 to 12 years old from low-income families for six to eight weeks during the summer, at no cost to the families.

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[**Convenience store snacking under a microscope**](#) (**CSPNet, 3/18**) The Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston has received a \$150,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food & Agriculture (USDA NIFA) for the CHOMPS Pilot Project, a coupon study to promote healthy snack options among adolescents in convenience stores.

[**NCA&T receives \\$2.7 in USDA grants**](#) (**The Business Journal, 3/18**) [N.C. A&T State University](#) in Greensboro has received eight separate grants worth a total of \$2.7 million from the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#), according to an announcement from Sen. [Kay Hagan](#)'s office. The announcement did not specify the timing of the grants, but they are part of the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture program intended to strengthen historically black land-grant colleges and universities such as N.C. A&T.

[**Stossel gives three foolish examples of government spending**](#) (**Fox News, 3/18**) John Stossel was on "The O'Reilly Factor" tonight, where he gave three foolish examples of government spending... Last but not least, the government has given nearly \$5 million to a University of Tennessee healthy eating campaign called "Get Fruved." (NIFA funded this project.)

[Loblolly pine's immense genome conquered](#) (**EurekAlert, 3/20**) The massive genome sequence of the loblolly pine — the most commercially important tree species in the United States and the source of most American paper products — has been completed by a nationwide research team, led by a UC Davis scientist. Sonny Ramaswamy, director of USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, which funded the research, noted that the loblolly pine plays an important role in American forestry. "Now that we've unlocked its genetic secrets, loblolly pine will take on even greater importance as we look for new sources of biomass to drive our nation's bio-economy, and ways to increase carbon sequestration and mitigate climate change," Ramaswamy said.

[Organic crops continue to grow nationally, worldwide](#) (**The Oregonian, 3/20**) Organic crops continued their upward climb again last year, according to figures released Thursday by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The agency said [in a news release](#) that in 2013 more than 25,000 operations were certified organic, an increase of 4 percent. The USDA oversees organic operations across the country and in 120 nations around the globe. USDA funds research projects under the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative.

[Finney County Community Health Coalition part of national pilot project](#) (**Garden City Telegram, 3/20**) Finney County has been chosen as one of 10 communities in the nation to participate in a new pilot project aimed at providing resources for local decision makers that will help them develop a better understanding of behavioral or mental health concerns in their communities. The goal of the project is to identify behavioral issues that are prevalent in the area, but more specifically, to determine how data about those issues is collected, analyzed and utilized. National partners include the National Institute for Food and Agriculture.

[Organic Food Sector Continues to Grow](#) (**The Fish Site, 3/24**) **U.S.** - The organic sector in the United States is continuing to grow domestically and globally, with more than 25,000 certified organic operations in more than 120 different countries around the world. The USDA has announced a number of new and expanded efforts to connect organic farmers and businesses with resources that will ensure the continued growth of the organic industry domestically and abroad. The 2014 Farm Bill, which was signed recently, also includes provisions that are a greater support to the organic community, including: \$20 million annually for dedicated organic research, agricultural extension programs, and education. The Cooperative Extension System is a nationwide, non-credit educational network. Every U.S. state and territory has a state office at its land-grant university and a network of local or regional offices staffed by experts that provide useful, practical, and research-based information.

[Researchers examine greenhouse pathogen risk](#) (**The Grower, 3/24**) Louisiana State University plant pathologist Melanie Lewis Ivey is studying how diseases enter greenhouses and cost-effective prevention methods, according to a news release. Ivey, who is tied into LSU's AgCenter, is collaborating with Ohio State University colleagues on a project funded by a \$2 million National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant. The AgCenter's portion is \$130,000. The researchers' goal is to identify the entry points for high-risk pathogens and develop best practices to reduce the chances of entry.

[Clover Corner](#) (**Spencer Daily Reporter, 3/24**) This year, Iowa State University, which was the birthplace of Cooperative Extension, celebrates the 100th anniversary of the Smith-Lever Act. This act established the Cooperative Extension Service, which connected land-grant universities to citizens all over the state and helped to educate them about current developments in agriculture and natural resources, community and economic development, 4-H youth development and human sciences. ISU Extension and Outreach's core purpose is to engage citizens through the research-based educational programs it provides. Last year nearly 1 million people directly benefited from Extension Outreach programming. Nearly 17,000 Iowans volunteer with Extension and Outreach programming to help reach those 1 million people.

[New videos detail soybean rust history, management](#) (**Southeast Farm Press, 3/25**) Growers will find key information to keep in mind about the ongoing threat of soybean rust and actions they can take to minimize potential losses from this disease in two videos now available online. The videos include highlights from numerous research and Extension projects carried out by land-grant university researchers from around the country involved in soybean rust research and monitoring efforts. They were produced with support from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

[USDA: One billion dollars in disaster aid on the way](#) (**AgWeb, 3/25**) Rancher and farmers who suffered losses due to disasters from 2012 through this year should assemble their paperwork now, in advance of USDA's self-imposed April 15 deadline for issuing guidance for receiving assistance. That was the message Agriculture Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden delivered at an event to kick off this year's National Agriculture Day festivities.

[Farmer uses Annie's Project](#) (**Globe Gazette, 3/26**) Nicole Jonas operates Red Granite Farm with her young family in Boone. As self-described owner, laborer and "chief of everything," Jonas runs the business with help from her husband, who is a horticultural researcher. She and her husband strive to produce about all they can on the land they have while maximizing the best use of her time without needing much outside help. That's where Annie's Project comes in. Funding is provided by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

[Researcher cites progress in search for drought-resistant soybeans](#) (**AgriPulse, 3/26**) A USDA plant scientist told a group of House staffers in Washington this week that his research team is making slow but steady progress on its search for drought resistant soybean varieties. [Thomas Carter Jr.](#), a geneticist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Soybean Unit, located on the North Carolina State campus in Raleigh, said his team has been studying variations in crops grown in dry areas around the world. NC-FAR Executive Director Tom Van Arsdall told Hill staffers at the meeting that Carter's work "would not be possible without public funding" through ARS, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and other agencies. "We need the investments in science so we can have these means to an end."

[Summit to take an in-depth look at urban agriculture in Virginia](#) (**Roanoke Times, 3/26**) Community stakeholders are invited to explore the importance of urban agriculture programs during the Virginia Urban Agriculture Summit, April 15-16 at the Holiday Inn Lynchburg. Attendees will take guided tours of

the nonprofit urban farm Lynchburg Grows, which has as its mission helping disadvantaged persons enjoy the healthy benefits of gardening. [Lynchburg Grows](#) is the recipient of a Community Foods Program grant from NIFA's processor, the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.

[N.H. farmers markets try to lure SNAP beneficiaries with dollar-matching programs](#) (**New Hampshire Business Review, 3/21**) When every dollar and calorie counts, one might wonder whether carrots from the grocery store are just as good for SNAP beneficiaries, not to mention less expensive. Smith says he worried about that, too, so he checked with UNH Cooperative Extension, which coordinates nutrition for the New Hampshire [SNAP Educational program, known as SNAP-ed](#). "It was more or less of a wash," Smith says. "My worry would have been that people who are on food stamps could not afford farmers markets. But that's not the case."

[Budget hearing: USDA-REE](#) (**House Committee on Appropriations 3/26**) Transcripts of Capitol Hill testimony from Catherine Woteki, Under Secretary for REE; Sonny Ramaswamy, NIFA Director; and others. Includes video that starts at the 10:03:18 point.

[Purdue researchers launch two new farm decision tools](#) (**Daily Herd Management 3/27**). A group of Purdue University researchers has led the "Useful to Usable" climate initiative in launching two free online tools to help farmers make crop decisions in variable weather conditions. Useful to Usable, or U2U, aims to improve profitability and longevity of U.S. farms amid a variable and changing climate. The project, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, is composed of a team of 50 faculty, staff and students from nine universities who specialize in applied climatology, crop modeling, agronomy, cyber technology, agricultural economics and other social sciences. The team is led by Linda Prokopy, Purdue associate professor of forestry and natural resources.

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[WSU researchers eyeing quinoa production in region \(Union-Bulletin, 3/27\)](#) Quinoa has captivated the world with its powerful package of proteins and phytonutrients and its gluten-free status. WSU's efforts in quinoa production and organic crops are geared toward spurring local agricultural economies. Funded by a \$1.6 million grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Murphy and his team are testing more than 1,000 quinoa varieties under a number of Washington farming systems and bioregions.

[LSU AgCenter part of greenhouse study \(The Advocate, 3/31\)](#) LSU AgCenter plant pathologist Melanie Lewis Ivey is studying how diseases enter greenhouses and cost-effective prevention methods. The project is collaboration with The Ohio State University and is funded by a \$2 million specialty grant from U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The AgCenter's part is \$130,000.

[National 4-H Council welcomes new chief information officer](#) (PR Newswire, 3/31) National 4-H Council has named Mitch Head as its new chief information officer. As CIO, Mr. Head will lead domestic and global technology strategies and provide leadership and direction in establishing efficient, cost-effective information systems that support the 4-H movement. 4-H, the youth development program of the nation's land-grant universities and Cooperative Extension System, empowers youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with adults.

[Rajiv Shah: Meet the Gujarati who may replace Nancy Powell as US Ambassador to India](#) (Indian Defence, 4/1) With US Ambassador to India Nancy Powell quitting, one of the names being considered as her replacement is Rajiv Shah, head of USAID. Rajiv Shah was Obama's pick for the job, the highest ranking Indian American in his cabinet and a Gujarati to boot. Before becoming USAID's administrator, Shah served as undersecretary for research, education and economics, and as chief scientist at the US Department of Agriculture. At USDA, he launched the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, which significantly elevated the status and funding of agricultural research.

[Childhood obesity research: Lessons from the field](#) (Health Canal, 4/1) A recent study reported in the media said that the obesity rate for young children, ages 2 to 5, has dropped 43 percent in the last decade. Still, other reports have said the rate has declined but not that much, has stayed the same or might even be up in different age groups. "There is a lot of conflicting research out there, which has always been the case in regard to nutrition-related research," said Paula Peters, assistant director for [K-State Research and Extension, Family and Consumer Sciences](#). Peters, along with others in K-State's College of Human Ecology, landed a five-year, \$4.5 million research grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to test community coaching as an effective method in reducing childhood obesity in seven states, including Kansas. The team is finishing up the third year of the project.

[Is Indian-American Rajiv Shah Most Likely To Replace Nancy Powell?](#) (Siliconindia News 4/1) Prior to becoming USAID's administrator, Shah has served as undersecretary for research, education, and economics, and as chief scientist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. At USDA, he was mainly involved in launching the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, which significantly elevated the status and funding of agricultural research. Shah has also served with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for a time period of seven years including as the director of agricultural development in the Global Development Program, and as Director of Strategic Opportunities.

['Historic wins' for organic industry in new Farm Bill](#) (Food Safety News, 4/2) "Like being thrown under the bus" was how organic farmers and others in the industry described their fate a little more than a year ago when Congress failed to agree on a new farm bill and instead extended the 2008 version. Gone were some previously funded programs — among them research, marketing, certification cost-share and data-collection programs. But, with recent passage of the 2014 farm bill (officially called the "[Agricultural Act of 2014](#)"), which President Obama signed into law on Feb. 7, it's a totally different story. Now, instead of being "under the bus," organic farmers and others in the industry are sitting on the bus. Funds are currently available for research projects under the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative.

April is Month of the Military Child; community to honor military kids (County 10, 4/3) Events this month across the state will honor Wyoming's military youth. April is the Month of the Military Child and recognizes the sacrifices made by military families and their children. Operation: Military Kids is a national effort to support children of deployed soldiers from all branches of the military, including the National Guard and Reserve. Operation: Military Kids Wyoming is an effort of Wyoming 4-H – University of Wyoming Extension's youth development program. Wyoming OMK is funded by Army Child, Youth and School Services and National 4-H Headquarters/U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).